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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ON MIDDLE EAST AND IRAN

#### Summary

-- The lead story in all Jordanian dailies today, June 16, is the ongoing trial of two high-level officials of the General Intelligence Department in a banking fraud case. Another prominent story in the papers is the government's preparations for the parliamentary elections scheduled for tomorrow, June 17. Reports on developments between the Palestinians and the Israelis, as well as developments in Iraq and continued confrontations between the Iraqi resistance and the allied troops continue to receive front page attention.

#### Editorial Commentary on Middle East

-- "Sharon's moderation and the [US] administration's extremism"

Daily columnist Tarek Masarweh writes on the back page of semi-official, influential Arabic daily Al-Rai (06/16): "The American position went back to its condemnation of the Palestinians. In return, Sharon began playing the role of the moderate, acknowledging the occupation of Nablus, Jenin, Hebron and other major Palestinian cities, accepting the Palestinian state, and offering a truce and a withdrawal.. Since there are, in Sharon's cabinet and within the Israeli ruling party, those who call for expelling the Palestinians and for violence against and death for the Arabs, then why should not Palestine have Hamas, Jihad and the PFLP? We have to remember that Washington, which turned the legitimate Palestinian opposition into terrorist organizations, has also cancelled all the symbols of the Palestinian Authority and agreed that its elected president be placed under siege. What does it mean to label both the opposition and the Authority as terrorists? How do they expect the Palestinians to accept political solutions under these circumstances? Is not rejecting the regime and the opposition together a denial of the Palestinian entity in its entirety?"

-- "Sharon asks for a truce"

Daily columnist Yaser Za'atreh writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (06/16): "Sharon asks for a truce with Hamas. Who would believe that this terrible `bulldozer' would finally go down on his knees and ask for a truce.. In light of this, we must wonder: when the resistance movement is achieving all this and forcing the occupiers to retreat while it suffers from the lack of Palestinian consensus, why not support it fully so that it might force the enemy to retreat even more?"

-- "Success in wars does not make peace"

Chief Editor Taher Udwan writes on the back page of independent, mass-appeal Arabic daily Al-Arab Al-Yawm (06/15): "The U.S. administration proved that it is the 'mother of warriors'. From its war on Afghanistan, through its war on Iraq, and now its war on the Hamas movement in Palestine, there lies a common denominator, namely the capability of President Bush to start wars and militarily win them. On the ground, however, the situation does not change much. America's military victories against the Taliban in Afghanistan and against Saddam Hussein in Iraq were not coupled with political victory. In other words, the Americans' capability to make wars is paralleled by drastic failure in making peace.. The problem with the U.S. policy is that it functions with the mentality of `those who are not with us are against us'. This is an approach that justifies war but does not make peace. Peace is established among enemies and not among parties of the same alliance. That is why the American war in Afghanistan failed to make

peace there and the tribal wars have only ended in the American media. The same thing in Iraq. America's weapons of mass destruction removed Saddam Hussein, but they failed in restoring Iraq as a stable and safe home for its people. As for the escalating peace crisis in the Middle East, Bush and his administration have already taken sides with Israel and its extremist security theory. That is why the roadmap, under America's concept of implementation, has generated a war on Hamas and Jihad. Tomorrow, we may see the American marines in the service of Sharon's military campaigns.

#### Editorial Commentary on Iran

-- "Iran's demonstrations are not a foreign conspiracy"

Daily columnist Bader Wardam writes on the op-ed page of center-left, influential Arabic daily Al-Dustour (06/16): "The leadership in Iran may claim an American conspiracy that is instigating Iranian college students to protest against the symbols and philosophy of the Republic and to call for liberal reforms. This is because all countries of the third world have become accustomed to ascribing their internal problems to the presence of a foreign conspiracy instead of acknowledging the root causes of these problems and finding logical solutions for them. However, Arab politicians and analysts have no right to mislead the Arab public by adopting this analysis and justification just to spite the United States. The truth that must be acknowledged is that the demonstrations of the liberal students in Iran have political, social and cultural justifications that stem from the Iranian status quo. Whoever wants to ignore this would commit the same sin of having ignored the internal contradictions in Iraq and blaming the United States."

GNEHM